



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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SMALLPOX VACCINATIONS ADMINISTERED TODAY IN SAN DIEGO

First inoculations of County health workers take place after careful screening

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) began the first phase of its Smallpox Vaccination Plan today by vaccinating volunteer County health workers.

The workers, part of the Public Health Response Team, were carefully screened prior to inoculation to ensure that none had any of the risk factors that could make vaccination dangerous to them, said Nancy Bowen, M.D., Public Health Officer.

"Considering the possibility for serious side effects with this vaccine, we are being very cautious with our volunteers," said Dr. Bowen. "Everyone who gets a vaccination has reviewed materials provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and has answered questions about contraindications."

Seventy-five County volunteers will receive inoculations over the next two months, Bowen said. Some of these workers will vaccinate Hospital Response Teams, and would investigate any suspected smallpox cases in the county. Workers will be vaccinated on a staggered schedule to allow for sick leave in the event of side effects.

Risk factors include eczema or atopic dermatitis, HIV/AIDS or any other condition that weakens the immune system; pregnancy; or living with an individual who has one of these conditions. National vaccine programs in the 1960s reported one to two people per million died after receiving the vaccine, and one in 20,000 suffered a serious reaction.

Public health volunteers attended education sessions offered in January by HHSA, where they learned of potential risk factors and side effects.

HHSA received 200 doses (two vials) of vaccine on Feb. 19 from the state Department of Health Services. More vaccine will be ordered as necessary.

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